

Motor

WEEK ENDING JANUARY 21 1984 55p

NEW

SUZUKI

**SUPERMINI
IS HERE**

TESTED



**MONTE CARLO
RALLY PREVIEW**

**WINTER WISDOM—
Accessories and driving aids**

StarRoadTest



SUZUKI SA310 GL

Most people still think of motorcycles when they think of Suzuki. The SA310 could change all that . . .

THE FIRST Suzuki supermini hasn't been long coming. Treading in the now faint footsteps of fellow motorcycle makers Honda, Suzuki has swiftly learned that the tiny sub-1-litre cars Japan loves have the world market appeal of raw fish and noodles. If you want to get on in global terms, you need a supermini. Honda's was the Civic, Suzuki's is just about to break

cover in the UK.

Launched amid much interest in Japan last year as the Suzuki Cultus, the SA310 (re-named for other markets) enters the 1-litre arena with serious intentions. Suzuki talk of performance and driver appeal, they talk of a car that "easily exceeds the established limits". Is the SA310 that good? General Motors clearly think so. Frustrated

in their own efforts to make a supermini for the right price they turned to Suzuki — highly experienced builders of micro-sized cars at minimum cost — to design and build one that could be sold on the American market as a Chevrolet. Well, that's the idea: the deal has yet to negotiate the political barriers facing all Japanese imports into the USA, even ones styled with the help of GM.

The SA310 certainly has the credentials to succeed as a "world car". Its dimensions are standard supermini at 141 inches bumper-to-bumper and a generous 88.5 inches in wheelbase; the three-door hatchback body has little indigenous character but a wealth of Computer Aided Design to keep its

weight down without compromising structural strength; and with a small frontal area, its *total* drag (as represented by a CdA of 0.63) points to a fuel-saving potential greater than that suggested by the only average 0.38 drag coefficient. Government figures quote a remarkable 67.2 mpg at 56 mph. More weight is saved under the bonnet. Suzuki's new 993cc all-alloy three-cylinder engine weighs only 139 lb fully equipped, yet develops a competitive 50 bhp. Supported on a carefully optimised three-point mounting system and driving to the front wheels via an "overdrive" five-speed gearbox, class-beating mechanical refinement is also claimed for Suzuki's newcomer. All this is in contrast to a



basic specification which really couldn't be simpler. MacPherson strut/semi-elliptic leaf spring suspension, rack and pinion steering and front disc/rear drum braking is all predictable stuff.

The UK gets the SA310 in GL trim which means with solid-state digital instrumentation, an AM/FM stereo radio, a rear wash-wipe and so on. The full equipment list (detailed later on) makes impressive reading. It will be all the more impressive if importers Heron Suzuki can hold the projected price down to the £3,999 on the cards at the time of going to Press. This would make the Suzuki cheaper than all its major rivals: cars like Austin Metro 1.0 HLE (£4,600), the Fiat Uno

45 ES (£4,070), the Ford Fiesta 1.1L (£4,525), the Nissan Micra GL (£4,250) and the Vauxhall Nova 1.0L (£4,372). But aggressive pricing is a Suzuki policy. The SA310 has to succeed on its own merits in a class not noted for any paucity of able cars.

PERFORMANCE

★★★ The SA310's three-cylinder engine is a *tour de force* of lightweight construction techniques. In addition to the aluminium alloy block, there's a hollow section camshaft and crankshaft, aluminium rocker arms and pistons, a lightweight alternator and a pressed steel crankshaft pulley.

The 993cc swept volume is achieved with undersquare bore/stroke dimensions of 74 and 77mm. On a modest 8.8:1 compression ratio and breathing through a twin-choke down-draught carburettor, the engine develops 50 bhp (DIN) at 5,800 rpm with peak torque of 55 lb ft achieved at 3,600 rpm. Fully transistorised ignition is standard.

The Suzuki's competitive power/weight ratio is reflected by performance which is brisk and punchy for a 1-litre car. On standing start acceleration, the SA310 is beaten only by the more powerful Fiesta and the exceptionally light yet equally powerful Micra: 60 mph from rest takes 15.7 sec (14.2 and 14.0 sec respectively for the Ford and Nissan). Against rivals which are deliberately over-g geared to obtain the best possible Government fuel figures at steady speeds, the sensibly-g geared Suzuki fares well in any top gear flexibility showdown. Its 5th gear 50-70 mph time of 27.1 sec, while bettered by those of the shorter-striding four-speed Metro (24.0 sec) and Nova (26.5 sec), is much better than the Micra's 36.1 sec: the Uno and Fiesta can't even reach 70 mph from the 20 mph starting point within the 1 mile allowed by MIRA's twin horizontal straights. If we take the 4th gear 30-50 mph increment as our benchmark the SA310 emerges near the top yet again, its time of 12.9 sec setting a standard which only the Fiesta (10.9 sec) can eclipse. The maximum speeds of our chosen rivals range from 84.3 mph (Nova) to 87.5 mph (Fiesta): here, the Suzuki pips all its rivals with a MIRA average of 87.9 mph, though this still falls a little short of the 90 mph claimed by the factory.

In practice, the Suzuki's get-up-and-go is matched by an even temperament and generally low engine noise levels. For a number of reasons, it's not a good idea to push the engine beyond 6,000 rpm (it's red-lined at a very optimistic 7,000); then it does become loud and boomy, not to mention strained and strangled — and there's no point. An ample spread of mid-range torque and well-stacked intermediate gear ratios allow brisk progress without the driver having to try that hard. The distinctive off-beat throb of an in-line "three" is ever-present, but only prominent with full throttle. Change into fourth or fifth, ease off the power, and the SA310 loafs along like a Lilliputian limo with a remarkable lack of mechanical fuss. Power delivery is generally crisp, but snapping the throttle open at low revs produces a nasty carburation hiccup — a persisting fault of smaller Japanese cars.

ECONOMY

★★★ This is really the crunch area for Suzuki. Making a small-capacity car perform well isn't too hard; to do this while retaining competitive economy is. The SA310 is proof positive that Suzuki have done their homework. Our overall consumption of 41.8 mpg is an outstanding result bettered only by Fiat's slower "Energy Saving" Uno (42.4 mpg) of our chosen rivals.

The steady speed figures from which we compute a touring consumption would tend to suggest that the car which gave 67.2 mpg in the Government tests was an exceptionally good one: our test car returned only 53.9 mpg at the same speed. Mind you, this is about what we'd expect considering the SA310's 20.1 mph/1,000 rpm gearing and still contributes to a very respectable touring figure of 47.7 mpg. Driving with anything approaching restraint, most owners should be able to crack the 50 mpg barrier. Given a tank of respectable capacity, this could mean a range of 350 miles or more. As it is, 6.8 gallons of 2-star are good for only around 300 miles — somewhat less than most rivals can manage.

TRANSMISSION

★★★ Like most of its supermini rivals (the Metro is a notable exception), the SA310 has five forward gears. All of them are indirect, the 0.757 top gear ratio giving (with the 4.12:1 final drive) a 20.1 mph/1,000 rpm cruise. Top speed is achieved in the 16.6 mph/1,000 rpm 4th gear while maximum speeds in the intermediate gears are 26, 48 and 71 mph at 6,000 rpm; nicely spaced.

All our testers found the clutch light and smooth in ordinary conditions but, surprisingly, it lacked the bite to accomplish a re-start on our 1-in-3 test hill. The gearchange, however, deserves top marks. In the best Japanese tradition, it has a light, quick action with precisely defined across-gate movements and well judged spring loading in the 3/4 plane. Only a mild tendency to balk into 1st when cold led to any irritation. No transmission whine was detected.

HANDLING

★★★ Sophisticated suspension the Suzuki doesn't have. At the front, three are MacPherson struts located laterally by a single transverse arm and longitudinally by an anti-roll bar; at the rear, a simple beam axle on three-leaf semi-elliptic springs.

MOTOR ROAD TEST No. 3/84

Make: Suzuki. **Model:** SA 310 GL

Maker: Suzuki Motor Co Ltd, Hamamatsu-Nishi, PO Box 1, 432-91 Hamamatsu, Japan

UK Concessionaires: Heron Suzuki GB (Cars) Ltd, 46-62 Gatwick Road, Crawley, West Sussex RH10 2XF. Tel: (0293) 518000.

Price: Undecided going to press. Expected to be £3,999



excellent



good



average



poor



bad

Don't, however, equate simplicity with deficiency. In this department, at least, the Suzuki does very well indeed. In town, it's handy, manoeuvrable and quick-reflexed; on the open road, light yet accurate and communicative steering inspire confidence in a crisp and capable chassis with an impressively neutral cornering balance and very strong grip in the dry. Basic stability and poise are excellent and commendably insensitive either to mid-bend bumps or throttle lift-off. Only strong understeer on tight bends betrays some fwd limitations when driving hard in the wet.

BRAKES

★★★ The Suzuki stops with the aid of a straightforward braking system comprising front discs, self-adjusting rear drums with diagonally split twin circuits and a servo.

Our testers judged pedal effort to be light but not over-servoed and progression good. The results of our tests at MIRA confirmed these impressions, a push of just 51 lb at 30 mph giving a fine 0.94 g stop with the front wheels at locking point. This was the best deceleration the Suzuki could achieve, more pedal load merely causing the wheels to lock earlier to the detriment of the g value. It required only 59 lb of pedal pressure to achieve an again commendable 0.84 g stop from 70 mph though, from this speed, it proved more difficult to prevent the front wheels locking for the last 10 to 15 yards.

In our demanding fade test, the SA310's brakes needed an initial increase in pedal pressure but soon stabilised and completed the rest of the routine without any significant loss of efficiency.

A two-way splash in the water trough reduced the efficiency of the brakes slightly, but it took only one stop for the system to return to normal. The handbrake, acting on the rear drums, easily held the car on the 1-in-3 test hill though, as mentioned earlier, attempting to re-start from this position led to excessive clutch slip and only minimal movement. The handbrake also gave an acceptable deceleration of 0.37 g from 30 mph.

ACCOMMODATION

★★★ Although the SA310 doesn't win any prizes for packaging, it is, at least, a realistic four-seater: Suzuki's previous UK models — the SC100 "Whizzkid" and the Alto — have been nothing if not cramped. Some seven inches longer than a Metro, the SA310 has marginally less combined front/rear legroom and a significantly different interior plan. Front seat travel is very generous for a small car (good enough to comfortably accommodate the tallest of our testers) but only at the expense of premium rear legroom. Four adults of average height can travel without compromise — just. Headroom, however, is good front and rear, and the interior has a pleasantly airy feeling.

Internal stowage space is adequate rather than generous, with a usefully proportioned non-lockable glovebox, rigid pockets in the front doors and a couple of small cubbies set into the rear seat flank mouldings. A fascia-mounted electric latch can be used to open the tailgate, giving floor level ac-

cess to the modestly-sized luggage compartment which took only 4.2 cu ft of our "Samsonite" test luggage. Release handles on each side of the 50/50 split backrest allow either or both portions to fall forward on to the cushion for increased luggage space when the rear seats aren't needed.

RIDE COMFORT

★★★ The SA310 has one significant weakness and that's its ride. Given its light weight, cart-sprung rear end and the degree of chassis tautness necessary to ensure crisp, responsive handling, it would be surprising if the ride were anything but lively. While the suspension rounds off small bumps quite well and remains acceptably smooth and controlled on the motorway, it can't adequately absorb larger undulations, and sharper edged irregularities promote a jarring vertical body motion that is simply uncomfortable. To its credit, however, the ride never gets seriously turbulent — even over the worst surfaces — and in a class where boulevard comfort is rare, the Suzuki doesn't actually fare too badly.

AT THE WHEEL

★★★ With the exception of a steering wheel which most of our testers thought a shade too large, the driving position prompted no complaints, there being plenty of legroom and a wide range of adjustment for the front seats. The major controls are well thought out and the pedals ideally spaced for heel and toe gear-

changes. The seats themselves are surprisingly good for a small car, with proper under-thigh support and effective shaping in the lateral and lumbar regions: they proved comfortable on long trips.

A single column stalk to the right of the steering wheel takes care of the wipers and dip/flash while the wipers and main headlamp functions are catered for by switches on either side of the instrument binnacle within fingertip reach of the wheel. The two horn buttons (one for either thumb) are conveniently located on the chunky steering wheel spokes, though the remaining minor controls are somewhat scattered about the fascia.

VISIBILITY

★★★ Like nearly all of its rivals, the SA310 is an easy car to see out of and place on the road: with slim pillars and plenty of glass, there are no significant blind spots. The nose slopes away quite steeply but, even so, it's easy to judge where the extremities of the car are when parking. The halogen lights are powerful and project a well-defined spread of light, while the wipers clear water from the screen efficiently and without smearing. The door mirrors possess an agreeably wide field of view but lack internal adjustment.

INSTRUMENTS

★★★ The analogue-versus-digital debate continues in the Press and, no doubt, bar rooms of

this land and looks like gaining momentum. If the Austin Maestro's rather poorly designed digital display makes a strong case for sticking with good 'ole dials, the Suzuki must put up the best argument yet for going solid state.

Contained within a conventional-looking rectangular binnacle is a large, centrally located digital speedometer arching space-efficiently over which is a bar graph rev counter. To the right are smaller bar graph displays for water temperature and fuel level, to the left a neat digital quartz clock and below an audio-visual economy driving "adviser" which tells you when to change gear and which gear to select via a small graphic of the gearbox gate: it flashes the suggested gear at you and, if you don't take any notice, reminds you with a gentle "beep" every 20 seconds or so.

The pale-orange graphics are kind on the eye but not so easy to read in strong sunlight. The rev counter is very well damped, if a little sluggish in its responses. The minor bar-graph displays have rather wide calibration steps. As ever, nothing's perfect but, in this instance, Suzuki aren't offering you a choice — it's solid state or nothing. We have a feeling digital instruments are here to stay. There'll be worse displays than the Suzuki's.

HEATING

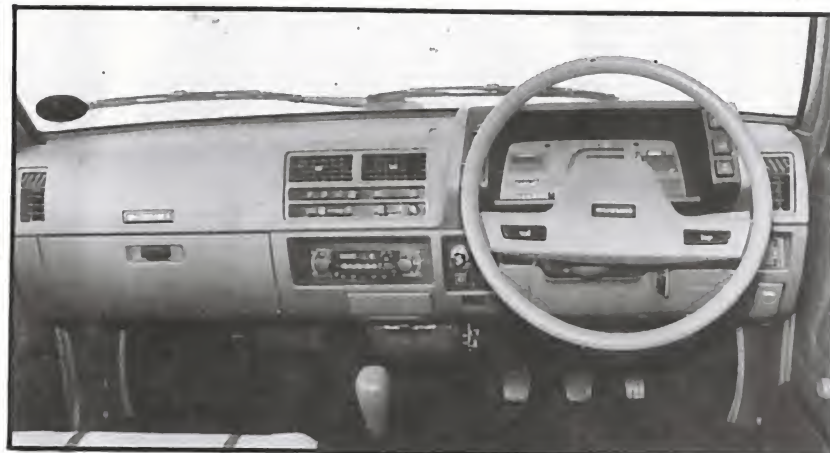
★★★ The presentation of the heating system is simplicity itself with one pair of slides for temperature and distribution and another for direct/recirculated air con-



Solid state instruments aren't everyone's cup of tea but the Suzuki's are the best we've come across

Facia is simple and not unattractive but minor switchgear is scattered

The Suzuki makes it as a full four-seater but rear legroom isn't generous



Cloth trimmed front seats are well shaped and comfortable; head restraints are standard



trol and fan boost. Heated air can be directed to the footwells or to the windscreen for demisting and output is ultimately high. But although the temperature slide has a mechanically smooth action, small adjustments result in an all-or-nothing response.

VENTILATION

★★ Suzuki have got it exactly right. Well, almost. Unlike that of most Japanese cars, the SA310's ventilation system is fully independent of the heater. With the distribution slide set to "bi-level", it is possible to have cool air at face level and warm on ram pressure alone — and the split is very good. Our only gripe is that the four facia outlets aren't adjustable for volume as well as direction.

NOISE

★★ The Suzuki can be as relaxed and untiring as many larger cars on a long motorway journey where its good part-throttle mechanical refinement combines with only modest wind noise: 70-80 mph is an easy cruising pace.

As mentioned earlier, the engine becomes far more throbby under hard acceleration (though it doesn't get unacceptably loud if kept below 6,000 rpm) and on coarsely surfaced roads, tyre roar is considerable. So it's really all down to conditions and circumstances: steady-state cruising is easy on the senses, a B-road hustle involves a bit more hub-bub.

Suzuki's modest luggage capacity can be improved by folding down either one or both portions of the backrest

PERFORMANCE

WEATHER CONDITIONS

Wind 5-15 mph
Temperature 37°F/3°C
Barometer 29.6 in Hg/1003 mbar
Surface Dry tarmac/adam

MAXIMUM SPEEDS

	mph	kph
Banked circuit	87.9	141.4
Best 1/4 mile	89.5	144.0
Terminal Speeds:		
at 1/4 mile	68	109
at kilometre	79	127
Speeds in gears (at 6,000 rpm):		
1st	26	42
2nd	48	77
3rd	71	114

ACCELERATION FROM REST

mph	sec	kph	sec
0-30	4.6	0-40	3.3
0-40	6.9	0-60	6.3
0-50	10.7	0-80	10.8
0-60	15.7	0-100	17.0
0-70	23.8	0-120	30.3
0-80	40.3		
Stand'g 1/4	20.2	Stand'g km	38.4

ACCELERATION IN TOP

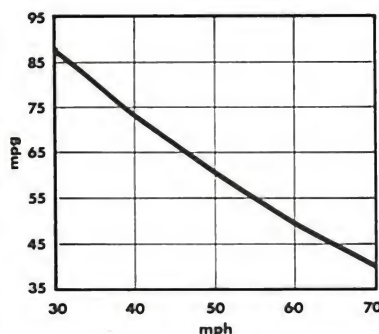
mph	sec	kph	sec
20-40	17.2	40-60	11.0
30-50	18.5	60-80	11.4
40-60	21.4	80-100	15.0
50-70	27.1		

ACCELERATION IN 4TH

mph	sec	kph	sec
20-40	12.6	40-60	8.2
30-50	12.9	60-80	8.4
40-60	14.8	80-100	9.9
50-70	17.5	100-120	14.6
60-80	29.1		

FUEL CONSUMPTION

Touring*	47.7 mpg
	5.9 litres/100km
Overall	41.8 mpg
	6.7 litres/100 km
Govt tests	44.1 mpg (urban)
	67.2 mpg (56 mph)
	42.1 mpg (75 mph)



Fuel grade	97 octane
	4 star rating
Tank capacity	6.8 galls
	31 litres
Max range*	324 miles
	521 km
Test distance	1,488 miles
	2,394 km

*An estimated fuel consumption computed from the theoretical consumption at a steady speed midway between 30 mph and the car's maximum, less a 5 per cent allowance for acceleration.

BRAKES

Pedal force, stopping distance, and average deceleration from 30 mph (48 kph)				
lb	kg	ft	m	g
20	9.1	118	35.9	0.25
40	18.2	50	15.3	0.60
52	23.6	32	9.8	0.94
Handbrake		81	24.7	0.37
Maximum from 70 mph (113 kph)				
59	26.8	194	59.2	0.84

FADE

Twenty 0.6g stops at 45 sec intervals from speed midway between 40 mph (64 kph) and maximum (64 mph, 124 kph), at gross vehicle weight.

Pedal force at start	lb	kg
	32	14.5

Pedal force at 10th stop	46	20.9
Pedal force at 20th stop	40	18.2

STEERING

Torque at wheel rim when parking and when cornering on 216ft diameter circle.

Parking	lb ft
	2.3
Cornering at 0.1g	1.3
0.3g	2.5
0.6g	4.9

Turning circle between kerbs	ft	m
left	27.8	10.9
right	28.0	11.0
Lock to Lock	3.5 turns	
50 ft diameter circle	1.1 turns	

CLUTCH

Total pedal travel	6 in	15 cm
Maximum pedal load	28 lb	13 kg

NOISE

	dBa	Motor rating*
30 mph	66	12
50 mph	72	18
70 mph	75	23
Maximum†	81	34

*A rating where 1=30 dBA and 100=96 dBA, and where double the number means double the loudness.

†Peak noise level under full-throttle acceleration in 2nd.

SPEEDOMETER (mph)

Speedo	30	40	50	60	70	80
True mph	28	37	46	56	65	75
Distance recorder: 0.7 per cent fast						

WEIGHT

	cwt	kg
Unladen weight*	14.1	716
Weight as tested	17.8	904
*with fuel for approx 50 miles		

Performance tests carried out by Motor's staff at the Motor Industry Research Association proving ground, Lindley.

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GENERAL SPECIFICATION

ENGINE

Cylinders	3 in-line
Capacity	993cc (60.6 cu in)
Bore/stroke	74/77mm
	(2.91/3.03in)
Cooling	Water
Block	Light alloy
Head	Light alloy
Valves	Sohc
Cam drive	Belt
Compression	8.8:1
Carburettor	Twin-choke, downdraught
Ignition	Transistorised
Bearings	4 main
Max power	50 bhp (DIN) at 5,800 rpm
Max torque	55lb ft (DIN) at 3,600 rpm

TRANSMISSION

Type	5-speed, manual
Clutch dia	6.7in
Actuation	Cable
Internal ratios and mph/1,000 rpm	
Top	0.757:1/20.1
4th	0.914:1/16.6
3rd	1.280:1/11.9
2nd	1.894:1/8.0
1st	3.416:1/4.4
Rev	2.916:1
Final drive	4.12:1

BODY/CHASSIS

Construction	Unitary, all steel
Protection	6-year Tuff-Kote Dinol anti-corrosion warranty (subject to terms and conditions)

SUSPENSION

Front	Independent by MacPherson struts, lower forward link, anti-roll bar and coil springs
Rear	Dead axle located by semi-elliptic leaf springs

STEERING

Type	Rack and pinion
Assistance	None

BRAKES

Front	Discs, 8.5in dia.
Rear	Drums, 7.1in dia
Park	On rear
Servo	Yes
Circuit	Dual, split diagonally
Rear valve	Yes
Adjustment	Automatic

WHEELS/TYRES

Type	Pressed steel, 4.0B X 12
Tyres	145 SR 12
Pressures	31/31 psi F/R

ELECTRICAL

Battery	12V, 35Ah
Earth	Negative
Generator	Alternator, 45 A
Fuses	7
Headlights	
type	Halogen
dip	110 W total
main	120 W total

GUARANTEE

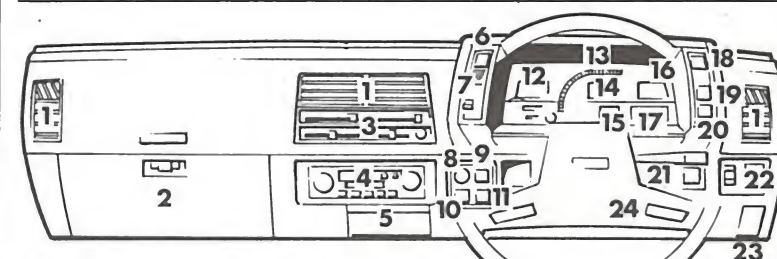
Duration ... 12 months unlimited mileage

MAINTENANCE

Free service at 1,000 miles
Schedule every 6,000 miles
Intermediate oil change N/A

DO IT YOURSELF

Sump	6.2 pints SAE 10W/40
Gearbox	4.0 pints SAE 75W/80.85
Rear axle	N/A
Steering gear	N/A
Coolant	7.6 pints
Chassis lube	N/A
Spark plug gap	0.7-0.8mm
Spark plug type	NGK BPR6ES
Tappets (hot)	0.23-0.27 mm Inlet
	0.28-0.32 mm Exhaust



- 1 Air vents
- 2 Glove box
- 3 Heating and ventilation slides
- 4 AM/FM stereo radio
- 5 Ash tray
- 6 Windscreen washer switch
- 7 Windscreen wiper switch
- 8 Cigar lighter
- 9 Heated rear window switch
- 10 Rear screen wiper switch
- 11 Rear screen wash switch
- 12 Digital quartz clock
- 13 Bar graph rev counter
- 14 Digital speedometer
- 15 Gearchange adviser
- 16 Composite bar graph Fuel/temperature display
- 17 Warning lights
- 18 Rear fog lamp switch
- 19 Headlamp switch
- 20 Headlamp "off" switch
- 21 Indicator flash/dip stalk
- 22 Electric tailgate release
- 23 Bonnet release
- 24 Horn buttons

FINISH



Considering its projected low price the SA310 is, on the whole, remarkably well screwed together. The paintwork and exterior trim look good, panel fits and shut lines are snug and even, the doors close with a quality "thunk", there are no groans or rattles.

Inside, you're met by much grey plastic and intricate injection moulding, yet the overall impression isn't overbearingly "plasticky" or, to coin an even less elegant adjective "Japanesey". There are even parallel red pin stripes running through the cloth seat trim to add that extra touch of European sports *chic* to the interior.

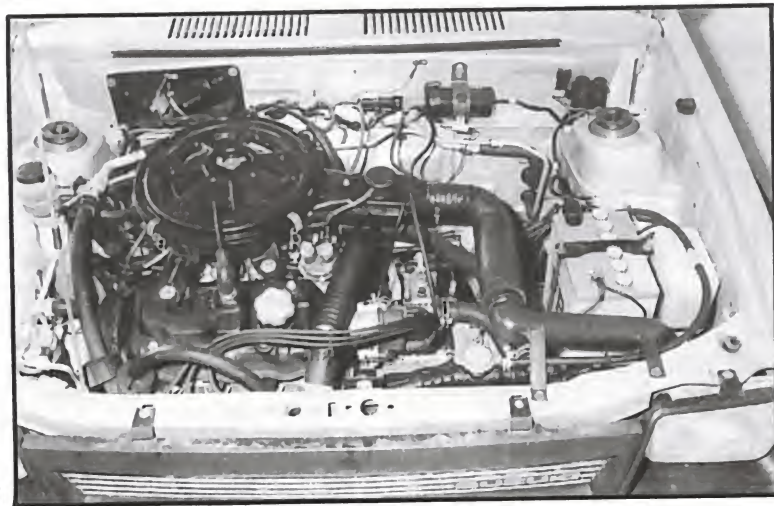
EQUIPMENT



Since Suzuki intend to import only the GL version of the SA310, it comes as no surprise that it's well equipped. Standard items include a stereo radio, a cigar lighter, a rear wash-wipe, cloth trim, head restraints, an electric tailgate release, a split rear backrest, tinted glass, a lockable fuel cap and full solid state digital instrumentation.



Tailgate aperture extends down to floor level for easy loading but the "boot" took only 4.2 cu ft of our "Samsonite" test luggage



Under bonnet presentation is far from neat but most service items are easy to get at

All that for around £4,000 seems more than fair.

IN SERVICE

After the first free service at 1,000 miles, Suzuki recommend a major service every 6,000 miles and there is no intermediate trip to the dealer for an oil change. The SA310 carries a 12-month unlimited mileage warranty. There is also a 6-year Tuff-Kote Dinol anti-corrosion warranty (subject to terms and conditions).

The compact, lightweight engine doesn't take up much room under the bonnet — all the major service items are easy to get at. At present, Suzuki has approximately 69 dealers throughout the UK.

CONCLUSIONS

Assuming the Suzuki SA310 GL costs near enough £4,000 when it goes on sale next month, sheer value for money will be a strong attraction. But not the only one. Suzuki may be new to the big time, but their first supermini is good enough to rock some established names: a brief flick back over the star ratings should show why.

Comparisons

PERFORMANCE	Suzuki	Austin	Fiat	Ford	Nissan	Vauxhall
Max speed, mph	87.9	86.0	86.0	87.5	87.4	84.3
Max in 3rd	71	78	72	72	81	74
2nd	48	50	47	47	52	48
1st	26	29	25	27	30	27
0-60 mph, secs	15.7	18.2	16.0	14.2	14.0	18.5
30-50 mph in 4th, secs	12.9	17.2	13.4	10.9	13.0	17.5
50-70 mph in top, secs	27.1	24.0	—	—	36.1	26.5
Weight, cwt	14.1	14.8	14.0	14.3	12.9	14.5
Turning circle, ft*	27.9	31.1	29.6	29.7	28.3	29.6
50ft circle, turns	1.1	1.05	1.2	1.0	0.9	1.0
Boot capacity, cu.ft.	4.2	8.4	9.8	7.0	7.4	7.8

*mean of left and right

COSTS AND SERVICE

	Suzuki	Austin	Fiat	Ford	Nissan	Vauxhall
Price, inc VAT & tax, £	3,999†	4,600	4,070	4,525	4,250	4,372
Insurance group	N/A	1	2	2	3	1
Overall mpg	41.8	39.7	42.4	39.7	37.0	35.3
Touring mpg	47.7	46.5	55.0	46.5	52.6	47.9
Fuel grade (stars)	2	4	4	4	4	4
Tank capacity, gals	6.8	7.0	9.2	7.5	8.8	9.2
Service interval, miles	6,000	12,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	9,000
No of dealers	69	1,550	334	1,241	425	680
Set brake pads (front) £*	25.39	18.86	11.50	21.39	10.69	20.01
Complete clutch £*	55.07	101.78	47.71	43.43	59.26	57.96†
Complete exhaust £*	76.78	71.59	40.76	76.51	53.14	53.76
Front wing panel £*	40.61	31.63	23.49	47.86	63.06	40.19
Oil filter, £*	4.31	3.85	4.08	4.36	4.70	3.23
Starter motor, £*	111.35	70.38	61.52	55.27	73.69‡	63.47‡
Windscreen, £*	108.25††	43.13**	69.69**	27.96	76.08**	38.58**

*inc VAT but not labour charges **laminated ‡exchange †provisional

STANDARD EQUIPMENT

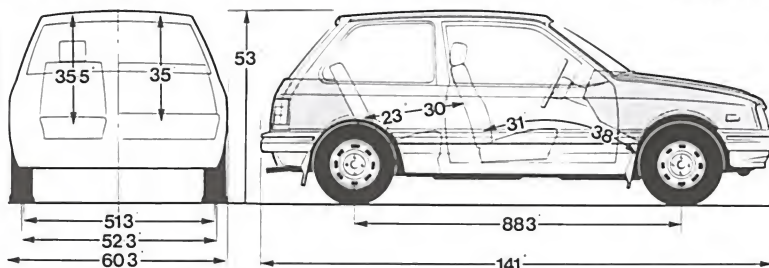
	Suzuki	Austin	Fiat	Ford	Nissan	Vauxhall
Adjustable steering						
Air conditioning						
Alloy wheels						
Central door locking						
Cigar lighter	●	●	●	●	●	
Clock	●	●		●	●	●
Cloth trim	●	●	●	●	●	●
Dipping mirror	●	●	●	●		●
Driver seat height adjust						
Driver seat tilt adjust						
Electric window lifters						
Fresh air vents	●	●	●	●	●	●
Headlamp washers						
Head restraints	●	●	●	●	●	●
Heated rear window	●	●	●	●	●	●
Intermit/flick wipe	●	●	●	●	●	●
Laminated screen	●		●	●	●	●
Locker			●			
Passenger door mirror				●	●	
Petrol filler lock	●		●	●	●	●
Power steering						
Radio	●	●		●	●	●
Rear central armrest						
Rear courtesy light						
Rear fog light		●				
Rear wash/wipe	●	●	●	●	●	●
Remote mirror adjust		●	●	●	●	●
Rev counter	●					
Reverse lights	●	●	●	●	●	●
Seat belts — rear						
Seat recline	●	●	●	●	●	●
Sliding roof						
Tape player						
Tinted glass	●		●		●	
Vanity mirror		●	●	●	●	●

TheRivals

Other possible rivals include the Citroën Visa 11RE (£3,995), the Daihatsu Charade CS (£4,079), Renault's 5TL (£3,995) and the Talbot Samba GL (£4,345)

SUZUKI SA 310 GL

£3,999

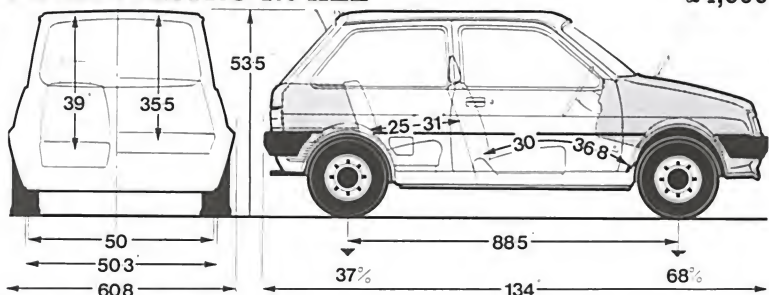


Capacity, cc	993
Power, bhp rpm	50/5,800
Torque, lb ft rpm	55/3,600
Valves	5ohc
Tyres	145 SR 12
mph 1,000 rpm	20.1
Test date	January 21, 1984

Suzuki's first effort in the supermini market is remarkably good, and outstanding value at the proposed price. Spirited performance and fine economy are combined with big car cruising refinement and sports car handling. Packaging falls short of the class best and ride is poor but digital instrumentation works well and finish is good.

AUSTIN METRO 1.0 HLE

£4,600

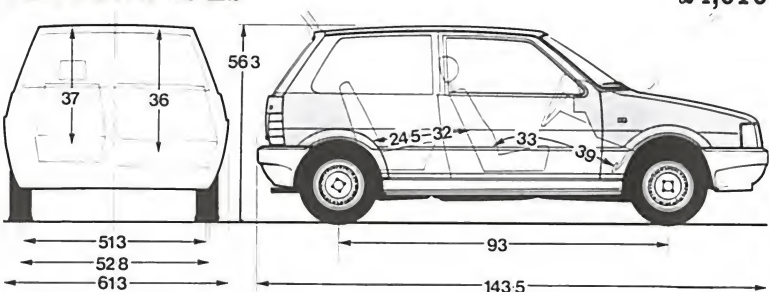


Capacity, cc	998
Power, bhp rpm	46/5,500
Torque, lb ft rpm	54/3,250
Valves	Pushrod, ohv
Tyres	135 SR 12
mph 1,000 rpm	19.1
Test date (Group Test)	October 15, 1983

In its latest, even more frugal version, the super-economy Metro combines fair performance with fine fuel economy and a versatile, roomy interior within a compact exterior providing exceptional visibility. Other strong points include handling, brakes, gearchange, instruments, heating and refined cruising. Despite comfortable new seats, the bus-like driving position won't suit all drivers, and some aspects of the ride are disappointing, but overall a fine little car.

FIAT UNO 45 ES

£4,070

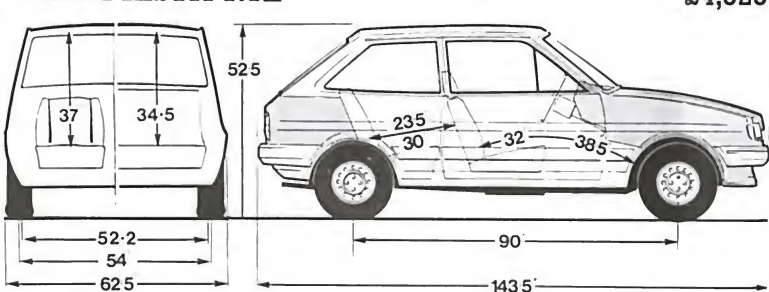


Capacity, cc	903
Power, bhp rpm	45/5,600
Torque, lb ft rpm	50/3,000
Valves	Pushrod, ohv
Tyres	135 SR 13
mph 1,000 rpm	20.6
Test date (Group Test)	October 15, 1983

In 3-door, Super ES form the Uno is a very competitively priced all-rounder and a worthy successor to the 127. Eager engine gives brisk performance in its class and economy is outstanding with ES economy gearing. Other virtues include very roomy accommodation, handling, brakes, visibility and heating/ventilation. Gearchange is Fiat's best front-wheel-drive effort so far, but still slightly rubbery. Good value at £4,070, 1.3-litre/5-dr 70S costs £4,420.

FORD FIESTA 1.1L

£4,525

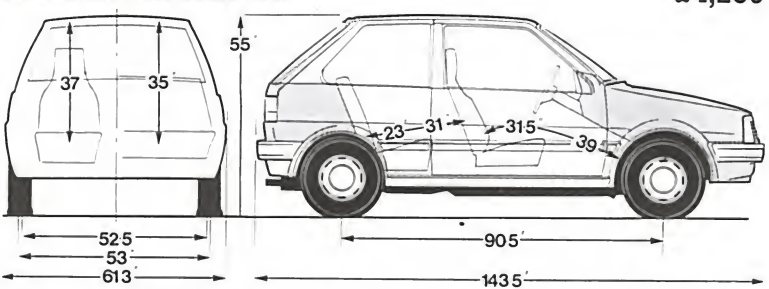


Capacity, cc	1,117
Power, bhp rpm	46.5/5,000
Torque, lb ft rpm	61/2,700
Valves	Pushrod, ohv
Tyres	135 SR 13
mph 1,000 rpm	21.3
Test date	January 7, 1984

In new-for-'84 guise the latest Fiesta is more than ever a capable all-rounder, especially with the worthwhile option of five-speed gearbox, in which form its performance and economy are both very competitive. Ride comfort still indifferent, but otherwise few flaws, with crisp handling, nice gearchange, smooth engine, comfortable driving position, powerful heating/ventilation and good accommodation among its virtues. But many foreign rivals are cheaper and/or better equipped.

NISSAN MICRA GL

£4,250

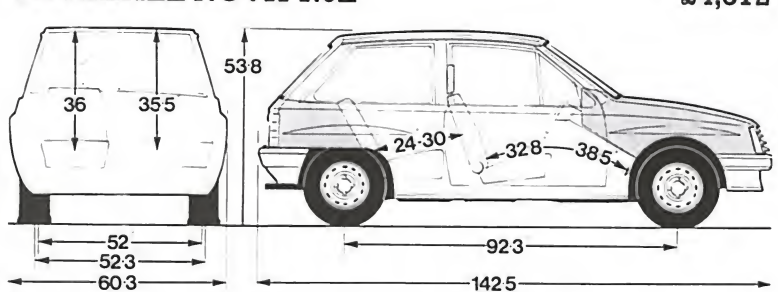


Capacity, cc	998
Power, bhp rpm	55/6,000
Torque, lb ft rpm	56/3,000
Valves	5ohc
Tyres	145 SR 12
mph 1,000 rpm	23.5
Test date	July 23, 1983

Equipped with a long-legged five-speed transmission and the more powerful version (55 bhp) of Nissan's new 1-litre engine, the Micra GL is potentially one of the most economical superminis and is also one of the quickest. Further virtues are its capable handling, slick gearchange, comfortable driving position and good visibility. Minor drawbacks are restricted rear seat accommodation and a mediocre heating/ventilation system, but overall it is a very effective contender.

VAUXHALL NOVA 1.0L

£4,372



Capacity, cc	993
Power, bhp rpm	45/5,400
Torque, lb ft rpm	50/2,600
Valves	Pushrod, ohv
Tyres	135 SR 13
mph 1,000 rpm	17.7
Test date	May 14, 1983

GM's long-awaited supermini is a typically competent all-rounder which doesn't excel in any particular area but has a combination of virtues which place it among the best in its class. In base 1.0 litre form it has very good economy, good handling and brakes. Gearchange, accommodation, visibility and refinement are all strong points while heating/ventilation, finish and ride are only average. Competitively priced.



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